Styling "toughness"

The concepts of style and stylisation have in the main been treated within different areas of sociolinguistics. Style is mostly used in variation studies (see Eckert & Rickford 2001) and stylisation in discourse oriented studies (e.g. Rampton 1999). However, building styles (e.g. through phonetic variation) and the momentary use of stylised voices or varieties are to speakers in many cases closely connected in the same endeavour of constructing certain personae.

In this paper I present results from an ethnographic study of language use, networks and identity in a multicultural high school in Copenhagen. Taking Eckert's view on variation as stylistic practice (Eckert 2004) I explore the ways in which especially male speakers use "emphasised" consonants (i.e. fortition and prolonged affricates), English slang loanwords and stylised multi-ethnolect as a means of presenting themselves as 'masculine', 'tough', 'cool' and 'superior'. The analysis of the stylistic constructions of 'tough' personae is related to the wider context of identity construction and meaning making in the local community of practice.

References: